

SWARTHMORE, PA—On Sunday, May 3, 2009, Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-07) spoke about the urgent need for health care reform at the Health Care Forum at Swarthmore College, hosted by Citizen Access and Swarthmore's Student Healthcare Action Network. Other speakers included Dr. Walter Tsou, former Philadelphia Health Commissioner; Marc Stier, Pennsylvania Director of Health Care for America Now; Ellen Magenheimer, Swarthmore economics professor; Dr. James Dixon, former Philadelphia Health Commissioner; and Chuck Pennacchio, Executive Director for Health Care 4 All PA.

"I ran for Congress primarily because of one issue: health care," said Congressman Sestak. "Several years ago, when my daughter was diagnosed with malignant brain cancer, as a member of the military I was able to see that she received some of the best care modern medicine can provide. We have been very blessed, but many families of hardworking Americans have not been so fortunate. I ran for Congress so that all Americans can have access to the quality of health care my daughter received. I will continue to fight to expand access to our nation's health care system so that more families can be as fortunate as mine has been."

The US health care system is supported by employers, individuals, and the State and Federal governments. In the midst of this economic recession, revenue has decreased for employers, leading to layoffs and reduced health care coverage. This has caused many individuals to lose their employer-sponsored insurance. These lower revenues also put a strain on States, who in turn have less to spend on care for the uninsured just as they see Medicaid roles increase.

Recognizing that affordable and quality health care is key to a strong community and strong economic growth, Congressman Sestak strongly supported the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which invests in bringing our health care system into the 21st century with information technology – that is proven to reduce costs, increase quality, and save lives. The package also protects health coverage for millions of Americans who have lost their jobs in this recession by providing up to 12 months of subsidized COBRA health insurance continuation coverage and a temporary state option to cover jobless workers through Medicaid. Modernizing our health care system will create hundreds of thousands of jobs. Economists estimate that, overall, this recovery package will save or create more than 250,000 jobs in the health care and education sectors.

*Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a*

*series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of “Deep Blue,” the Navy’s anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the “Global War on Terrorism.” He served as President Clinton’s Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the U.S. Congress.*

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